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A  
VOYAGE  
TO  
RAMSGATE  
FOR  
HEALTH:

INTERSPERSED WITH  
REFLECTIONS  
NATURAL, MORAL, AND DIVINE.

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By HENRY BLAINE,  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT TRING, HERTS.

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*Talk ye of all his wondrous Works, • Psalm cv. 2.*

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VOYAGE

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[ iv ]

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# P R E F A C E.

CHRISTIAN READER,

**T**H E following reflections were such as occupied my mind while engaged in that short excursion; and the unhealthy state of my body, together with the critical nature of my circumstances, with regard to my church and family, gave a solemn turn to my thoughts, and disposed my mind for serious meditation.

Indeed, the design has very much taken up my thoughts from the first moment I entertained the idea of writing. I found my mind much inclined to communicate something to the people of God, that might serve to inform them in what state I am about to leave the world; namely, that my views of



the precious things of God are the very same now, I have death, judgment and eternity in the nearest prospect, as they were in the brightest days of my health and prosperity. The words sometimes of a dying man carry great weight with them, and what is said, is less liable to proceed from false motives, as in my present circumstances it is hardly to be thought the dictates of vanity have much weight with me. This vice is very observable and disgusting in those who have lived to publish their thoughts to the world; and because I felt the impressions of this hateful disposition, I have, in a great measure, hitherto kept my thoughts concealed from the publick eye. I have been inclined to wish that men of sense could be convinced, that supercilious airs fit no more gracefully on a preacher or author, than on a coxcomb; that pride arising from supposed greater abilities, renders a man equally despicable with that which results from a fine coat. However I might be prevailed upon in the days of my health and prosperity,

through



through my weakness and folly; yet now, while I am making these awkward scratches with my pen through feebleness, and every other symptom shews the shattered state of my nerves, and seems loudly to foretel my approaching dissolution; my vanity is curbed, as I am never like to have an opportunity to receive the caresses of my friends, should they approve of my performance. But as, in the course of this severe exercise, the Lord has afforded very establishing evidence of the truth; I was led to wish, by the testimony of a dying man, that others might be confirmed in their faith of these great and good things. Should this be the case, I should rejoice to die like Samson of old; if, with my fall, the kingdom of Error is made to totter, and that of Truth is more established. With these hopes I take my leave of the world, the church, and my friends (but if a contrary wind should unexpectedly blow me back to life, I hope they will hear good tidings of me in future), in firm expectation of shortly meeting with all those who have

trusted their souls in those safe hands into which I have committed my own. That my own God and Redeemer may attend these observations with his divine blessing, is the earnest, and, perhaps, dying prayer of

H. B.

A VOYAGE

## VOYAGE TO RAMSGATE, &c.

**I**N hopes of recovering that invaluable blessing, health, on Friday, August 10, 1787, I embarked on board the ship **FRIENDS**, bound for **RAMSGATE** in **KENT**.

I had heard there was such a place; and many had raised my expectations by their reports of the efficacy of sea-bathing; and others encouraged my hopes, by repeating their own experience of benefit received. By these means I was induced to determine on this little voyage. It reminded me of the never-to-be-forgotten season, when urged by some motives, and impelled by a power unseen but not unfelt, I entered on board that stately vessel which the Lord's prophet saw in a storm, Isaiah liv. 11. The report of a state of rest and happiness, made by the gospel, attracted my attention, gained credence in my mind, and created strong desires to see and enjoy it. It was *then* I began to feel a disease I was a stranger to before: I grew restless and uneasy under that foul-disorder, and earnestly longed for health and cure\*. The experience of others, who had tasted and felt the powerful efficacy of the waters of life, enlivened my hopes of obtaining the wished-for blessing; and under these circumstances I set sail for the port of Glory near thirty years ago.

While we waited for the time of sailing (for different purposes, I suppose), many came on board,

\* Jeremiah xxxiii. 6.

and



and appeared to me, at least, as if they intended to embark with us: but they left not the harbour, but, urged by other occasions and inducements, they took leave of their friends and departed; while we who were bound for a distant place, kept steady to our purpose, turned our backs upon home, and waited patiently for the gentle breeze and driving tide to convey us to the desired port.

How many have I seen, in the course of my profession, whose appearance among those who had entered on board the Gospel vessel to sail for the Glory shore, would have led us to conclude they were of one mind with us, that they had heaven in prospect, and in hopes of being brought in safety there, they had said to the people of God, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you \*?" But, alas! when the time of decision arrived for them to turn their backs on the dear delights of sin, they gave awful proofs, that they loved their own native country best, that the heavenly inheritance had not attractions to move them; but when their "by and bye †" came, some weeping, and others laughing, they bid the church adieu:—"They shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter ‡."

The prefixed time for sailing now arrived; it was time for the master to enquire, who would, and who would not go with him. We, whose minds were fully disposed to sail, sat ourselves contentedly down, watched the movement of wind and tide, and, while our bodies were in the vessel at London, our minds were at the desired haven. I am apt to conclude, that there is a solemn moment when God, by his providence, puts the important question to every profes-

\* Zechariah viii. 23. † Math. xiii. 21. ‡ Job xx. 17.

for, believer or unbeliever, "Will ye also go away \*?" and every man's conduct determines, whether God or the world holds the sway in his heart. Grace inclines the soul born of God, to chuse that "good part which shall never be taken away from it †;" and his heart takes rest in his choice; and until he gains the accomplishment of his wishes, he patiently waits in the use of those means, and for those aids, which God has appointed to convey him to the end of his desires.

When our sails were displayed, and cable unloosed, assisted by a gentle gale, we began by degrees to view the lofty towers, the aspiring churches, and all the grandeurs of London at a distance behind us: in hopes of finding something we could not find in town, we turned our attention from the pleasures, and riches, and pomps of London; we bid farewell, for a time, to our dearest friends; we laid aside our daily and domestic cares, and cheerfully forsook the dear delights of home.

O Wise and prudent lawgiver of Israel! who can but admire the grace manifested in thy conduct? who didst turn thy back on the gay delights of Pharaoh's court, and set thy face towards the tents of Israel, though the one had every thing to delight, and the other every thing to disgust the carnal eye; for thou didst choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward ‡. Thus the man who feels the constraining influence of divine grace, has his attention and affection set upon other objects,—  
"for he looks at the things which are not seen §."  
The things of the present state, whether lawful or

\* John vi. 6. 7.

† Luke x. 42.

‡ Hebrews xi. 25.

§ 2 Corinthians iv. 18.

unlawful, will no longer serve as a satisfying portion to his soul: for he is convinced, that for health and wealth, and real prosperity, he must look out for a "better country \*." The bonds and ties which fastened him to present things, by divine grace, are in a measure loosened; and his heart moves towards heavenly objects, like the ship impelled by the blowing gale.

Many of us who went on board, had left our dearer comforts behind us. Ah! said I, so it must be, my soul, when the "master comes and calleth for thee†." My tender wife! my prattling babes! my cordial friends! my affectionate church! when the important moment comes, while you on the shore of life stand solemnly waiting my departure, I launch away to prove that unknown voyage from world to world. But hope of safe arrival in the land of light, hope of a more joyful meeting with you another day, softens and sweetens the solemnity of that important moment; let us then patiently wait until death, like the vessel of friendship, comes to convey us safely to the blissful shore. So, as I have now done, may I then do! I seriously meditated my voyage; I entered on board, not with hurry and confusion, but with a steady, cool, and deliberate mind. I had ordered my affairs with some degree of discretion at home. I took a tender leave of my friends; and in faith of the soundness of the ship, and the care of the master, I cheerfully set sail for the unseen port.

Blessed Jesus! there is no danger where the bottom is grace; the pilot, the Lord of love; the convoy, angels of light; and the gales are gales of favor, that waft us towards the eternal shore. Cease then, my fearful soul, thy ungrateful complaints; fear not but that He who has undertaken to conduct thee

\* Hebrews xi. 16.

† John xi. 28.



through the wilderness of life, will safely convey thee over the jordan of death, and happily land thee on the shore of joy and peace.

Loosened from the shore, our vessel moved under a gentle breeze down the river Thames, amidst the numerous tiers of merchant ships, of different countries, which made the inhabited water appear like the populous land. Who could view this charming sight, without exclamations of thankfulness to the Ruler of all nations, for the *sweets* of peace and *benefits* of commerce? O happy day! when the Prince of Peace extends his heavenly sceptre over all the heathen world, and takes them for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession\*! Instruments of death! we throw you for ever aside, or translate the bloody sword, and piercing spear, into the useful plough-share and necessary pruning-hook. Love, that powerful bond, shall then tie the most distant nations in the closest union; and then, in its fullest sense, we shall "by love serve one another†."

Who can recount the benefits of commerce? Self-interest is the law by which individuals are impelled, and God over-rules for the advantage of the whole. Urged by the hope of gain, the inhabitant of the most distant region spends his strength and his sweat, sells his rest and ease, and ventures his dearest life amidst a thousand dangers to supply me with some useful article of life: he, in return, takes what I can spare, and supplies his own wants with that wherein I abound. Infinite God! how wise and just is the distribution of the blessings of thy providence among mankind! "so that that nation which gathers much, hath nothing over, and that which gathers little, hath no lack‡." It is commerce that thus connects the

\* Psalm ii. 8.      † Galatians v. 13.      ‡ Exodus xvi. 18.

most foreign nations in mutual interest, while it enlists every element into its friendly service. Hush, therefore, O my God! those boisterous and bloody passions of man, which, with the lives of men, often lay genial commerce bleeding on the ground. But, while viewing those merchant ships which bring our "food from afar\*," let us meditate the state of the generality of their inhabitants. "These are the men that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters†; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep‡; these have seen him raise the stormy wind which lifteth up the waves thereof§; they have been mounted up to heaven, and have gone down again to the depths||; their soul hath melted because of trouble; they have reeled to and fro like a drunken man, and have been at their wits end¶." Surely these will pay the deepest reverence to "him who gathers the wind in his fist\*\*," and "the mighty waters in the hollow of his hand††." Surely, when God displays his tremendous power in his works, and the "voice of the Lord is upon many waters; when the God of glory thundereth, when the powerful voice of the Lord displays his majesty‡‡;" surely, I say, every rational being must bow down with reverence before him, when it is seen that the very beasts are impress at his tokens: "for the voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve§§." But the very reverse of this, is the doleful case with those heroes in impiety; for were we to search among all the rebels against the government of God, for those most hardened and desperate in blasphemy and profaneness, we should find them amongst those who see the won-

\* Proverbs xxxi. 14.

† Psalm cvii. 23.

‡ v. 24.

§ v. 25.

|| v. 26.

¶ Psalm cviii. 27.

\*\* Proverbs xxx. 4.

†† Isaiah xl. 12.

‡‡ Psalm xxix. 3, 4.

§§ v. 9.

ders of God in the deep, who constantly ride over the mouths of a thousand gaping graves. How can we account for this monstrous stupidity—that man should be more brutish than the beasts that perish? Is there not something grand, solemn and majestic, in the thundering skies, rolling seas, and bellowing wind, suited to strike the human mind with awe? Has not man a reasonable, thinking, immortal principle, and capable of drawing conclusions from appearances so noble and great, and saying, “Lo, these are *parts* of his ways; but how small a portion is heard of *him*! and the thunder of his power, who can understand \*?” Has not God implanted in the soul of man a never-to-be-destroyed principle, which points him to God his Maker? What infernal disposition then must that be, which withstands and rebels against all these loud witnesses for God in his works? It is that which can have no name worse than its own—it is sin.—Man is hardened “through the deceitfulness of sin †.” On this account, displays of power, justice and glory from God, have proved ineffectual, properly to impress the soul of man; but man, left to the native workings of his own depraved mind, has shewn worse than infernal boldness in his defiance of God; for when devils revered their Maker in human nature,—hardened “man spat in his face ‡.”

The passengers in our vessel were chiefly of the joyous tribe, and appeared to be persons more in quest of pleasure than health; they might, I thought, bear some resemblance to that motley group of professors, who are more in pursuit of the gratification of their curiosity, than the health of their souls; and, like them, generally pursue the one, to the great hazard of the other. As for myself, and

\* Job xxvi. 14.

† Hebrews iii. 13.

‡ Luke iv. 41. Matthew xxvi. 67.



a few more on board, *Health* was the prize at which we aimed. A sound and healthy state of soul and body, is an unspeakable blessing. God has appointed *means* of preserving, or restoring, the one and the other. The means are within the limits of my power, and I am bound in duty to use them; but the efficacy and success of them depend on the blessing and power of God. While I use the means, and trust in the Lord for success, I at once shew my obedience and faith.

There may be some of this company, who labour under disorders unknown to me, and have great expectations from bathing for a cure; they may be, as too many are, ignorant that God alone is the giver and preserver of health: their dependence is placed on the means which are within their own power; and this fleshly confidence may have so far prevailed, as that they have never sought nor desired the grace and power which only can give efficacy to their endeavours. This is a species of *idolatry*, which is very common, but seldom observed, but prevails in the civil and religious actions of men unnoticed through the whole of life. It was a charge brought against one of the kings of Judah\*, and may, with equal justice, be brought against every man in ten thousand instances.

Ah! how many make this fatal mistake in matters of religion, and hence never obtain relief for their souls! because God has "curst him who maketh flesh his arm, for his heart departeth from the living God†."

Our vessel, though it set sail with a fair wind, and gently fell down the river towards her destined port, yet once or twice was nearly striking against other vessels in the river, to her own injury; but, by the

\* 2 Chronicles xvi. 7. 12.

† Jeremiah xvii. 5.

care of the steerfman and sailors, ſhe was timely prevented.

How often has the ſhip of the Church been in the like danger in her voyage through this world! and but for the care of her great Pilot, and wife and good mariners, which he has inſtructed and employed, and who have embarked their ALL in this bottom, ſhe had long ago been daſhed to pieces, ſunk and overwhelmed in obſcurity, and nothing of her would now have remained to have ſhewn her ancient beauty and glory.

She has more than once approached too near that ſumptuous veſſel, called **WORLDLY GLORY**; but one or two of her ſagacious crew had diſcovered her danger, and gave the alarm.

So it was when Conſtantine the Great courted her favour; ſo it was when the pretended vicar of Chriſt put on a triple crown; and ſo it was when the Stuarts bore ſway in our land, and invited her to ſhare the honours of kingly favour, and join her intereſts with thoſe who regarded the favour of men, more than the approbation of God. Nay, ſo far has the greater part of her crew been themſelves infatuated, as to be fond of keeping company with her, who looked ſo glorious to the eye.

But others, more wary, have ſeen, that a church, whoſe diſtinguiſhing marks and chief excellence was worldly glory, was an unfit, and unſafe companion in a rough ſea, for ſo ſmall a bark as the *real church* of Chriſt has hitherto been; for churches, inveſted with worldly glory, ever carry ſuch high ſails, and run at that furious rate, that it has been dreadfully dangerous to approach too near their ſwelling ſides.

But he that is her owner, has undertaken to be her pilot, and has ever ſtood at the helm ſince the moment he ſet her afloat; and has ſolemnly engaged

his honour, to preserve her and all her happy crew, and safely "to bring them to their desired haven\*."

With wind and tide in our favour, we made way apace towards our intended port. How infinitely serviceable are all the elements to promote our welfare and happiness, while God keeps them in subjection to us! But let him but give them a commission to cast off their obedience, and assume the mastery, what destructive havock do they make among the devoted sons of men! Then the ungovernable winds furiously drive the frightened sailer into the jaws of death, and the boisterous waves bid defiance to maritime power and skill. In this rebellion of elements, the courageous heart, the skilful head, and the brawny limb, are as ineffectual to save from destruction, as the feeble efforts of an infant. Our successes and victories, as a nation, intirely depend on a favourable concurrence of circumstances in the elementary world, and a favourable concurrence of circumstances equally depends on the will of God; and thus nations, for prosperity in trade, and success in war, are alike dependent on him alone with individual persons.

In this view, it is the duty of nations to acknowledge God, and that acknowledgement is usually crowned with success.

There may be a general faith in Providence, for temporal preservation, where there is no particular belief in Jesus for eternal life; but faith, in every view, gives honour to God, and God commonly evidences his regard to faith.

The distinguishing difference in the events of fortune, as they are falsely called, is principally owing to the Divine disposal of second causes.

The wind and sea, over-ruled by God, shall help forward Israel's deliverance and safety; while they

\* Psalm cvii. 30.



serve as instruments for him to work with, to the destruction and overthrow of the power and pride of Egypt\*.

It is God that holds the balance of power among nations, which he gives or takes at his pleasure; and if he raises up one tyrant, to scourge the rest of the guilty inhabitants of the world, a prosperous train of events shall follow him, and even his iniquitous designs shall succeed.

Thus guided, an imperious Alexander, under many disadvantages, shall destroy the power of Persia, and carry his successful arms through the known world†.

Happy the people who, being brought into a state of friendship with God, have creatures of every order enlisted into his service for their general good‡! This subjection of inferior creatures was forfeited by the disobedience of Adam; for he having cast off his allegiance to God, was justly deprived of the service of creatures of the lower order§, and, in many respects, degraded to servitude and drudgery. When I have seen this truth exemplified in one of the human race, originally head of the creation, and lord of inferior creatures, so far disgraced as to clean the stable of the horse, the sty of the hog, or the pen of the cackling goose;—I am ready to exclaim, “The crown is fallen from thy head!” but by the obedience of Christ this favor is again restored||; and he exercises a dominion, which he is engaged to maintain for the present and eternal good of his Saints.

There was no spectacle appeared more affecting in all this little voyage, than the bodies of those unhappy malefactors, which were hung up *in terrorem*, on the margin of the river Thames. Surely

\* Exodus xiv. 22. Hebrews † Hebrews i. 14. Job v. 23.  
xi. 29. § Lamentations v. 16.

† Daniel xi.

|| Psalm viii. 5, 6.

these were some of the execrable characters whom Justice pursued; who, though "they escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffered not to live\*." Yet, while the sight creates an awful horror in the mind, it may lead us to reflect on the great utility of human laws, and the proper execution of justice at human tribunals. In this depraved state of things, anarchy and confusion would follow, were the unruly passions of men suffered to reign without control; and, with some men, the gallows and halter have more terrors in them, than the anger of God. These men, by superior force, might invade the property or lives of the less criminal, nay, perhaps, of the already distressed venturers on the mighty deep; and with hearts cased with barbarity, and lost to every generous feeling, preyed upon the helpless, like the merciless lion upon the defenceless lamb. These are the worst of brutes in human shape, with the souls of men, and the dispositions of devils. These fear not God, nor regard man. From bloody and deceitful men, good Lord, deliver us! They might perpetrate their heinous crimes, far remote from home, and beyond the ken of human inspection; but Justice has long arms and penetrating eyes.

There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves†." In these victims of justice, we discover the just rewards of sin; ignominy and shame in this life, and the burning displeasure of God in the next. Whatever pleasure or advantage these deluded men might promise to themselves in their abominable projects, the end, the doleful end, is the gallows and hell. Such, O my soul! is the bitter conclusion of all the delicious sweets that Sin offers to those who are deceived thereby: "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death‡." Where

\* Acts xxviii. 4.

† Job xxxiv. 22.

‡ Pro. vii. 27.

the crimes of these lawless men were committed, is unknown to me: but God has given the earth to the children of men; and having ordained rulers, to be a terror to evil men\*, has given them an extent of dominion answerable to the execution of their duty, and legislative justice takes cognisance of crimes committed by sea or land. The infringer of just laws is never safe, because he cannot fly to that distant place where Justice extends not her vindictive power. No doubt but the gibbet was out of sight, being far off in the alluring moment, when the prospect of gain moved the hand of villainy; but the tempter might see the noose preparing for the neck of the covetous thief: so are the deluded votaries of Sin, hood-winked to their eternal undoing. How can we but wish and pray for the display of that grace which allays and controls those furious and destructive passions in the breasts of men, and creates and imparts dispositions which serve instead of all laws to restrain them from evil, and dispose them to good! Was the grace of that promise—Isaiah xi. 6—9. universally dispensed, every man would carry the law of kindness in his own bosom, and possess a disposition to obey. Every one he met, at home or abroad, would manifest the kindness of a brother or friend, and regard his interest just as his own.

O, Prince of Peace! thy power display,  
And hasten on the blissful day;  
Drive the usurper from his throne,  
And rule the world as *all* thine own.

Having passed these spectacles of horror, a fair wind and flowing tide smoothly carried us towards the boundless ocean. How peaceable and smooth has the passage of the church been in some ages and

\* Romans xiii. 3.



seasons, while she was sweetly and safely carried forward toward the peaceful shore of blest eternity! But peaceful seasons often beget security, while the storm awakens to watchfulness and prayer.

When we drew towards the conflux of the river Thames, there were two objects that attracted our notice : the one, the king's guardship, placed there for the purposes of good œconomy ; the other, a large painted vessel, which floated on the surface of the water, and is called a buoy. While we were passing the king's ship, I heard the report of a cannon, and saw the flash of the charge at some distance ; and, on enquiring the reason of such a circumstance, was informed, it was customary for every ship which passed, by way of obedience, to lower her top-sail ; but our sailors, being willing to put the attention of the king's men to the trial, kept up their top-sail ; but the firing of the gun made them hasten to shew their obedience, for fear of a more unfavourable salute ; for though a flash of powder might give us some alarm, the discharge of a ball might make us *feel* the effects of disobedience. This instance may serve to prove to us the necessity of authority and power being united for the purpose of government ; for authority without power is like the dead lion liable to be insulted by every mouse. The investiture of authority and power among men for the maintenance of good order of human society, is the ordinance of God \* ; but the manner in which this is administered seems rather a matter of discretion and choice. The greater part of mankind seem to have approved of absolute monarchy, or of lodging this power and authority in the hands of an individual. Others, judging it dangerous to entrust the welfare of thousands to the caprice of one, have lodged this power in the hands of a certain number

\* Romans xiii. 1.

in a more exalted station, which they have called Aristocracy; but finding there may be a combination among a few, which may tend to the oppression of the greater part, others have chose rather to retain this power in their own hands, which they call Democracy, and to elect men chosen from among themselves to execute their own acts. Government, as the ordinance of Heaven, seems to be the just exercise of authority and power; and the command of God is obedience to that *just exercise* of authority and power, not submission to tyranny or oppression. Nor is monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, simply considered, the ordination of heaven, but the just exercise of either of them, for the maintenance of good order; though men often fight for the one to the ruin of the other. With this view of things, we might revere the ordinance of God, whether the execution of it was put into the hands of an infamous Nero, or an equitable Solomon. And we may from hence farther see, that the civil actions of men are the objects of Government inspection, and not their religious sentiments. While our actions are correspondent with the peace and good order of society, Government ought to protect us; and our religious sentiments and worship are no farther punishable than as they affect the civil establishment of the country wherein we live; for my conduct may be equally peaceable, whether I profess the doctrine of predestination, or the freedom and efficacy of the human will; whether I worship God with the book prepared to my hands, or with the extempore freedom with which I ask a favour of a friend; whether this worship is performed in a fabric with bells in the steeple, or in a plain un-ornamented building. Not one can be produced in all the New Testament, of religious sentiments or worship being the objects of Government inspection, any farther than they affect the peace of society. The union of authority and power,

power, as it is the ordinance of God among men, and the just exercise of both appointed for the purposes of government, so he observes the same rule in the exercise of his government among his creatures. And where his authority is despised, and his mercy slighted, his power is employed to compel to submission; that in the end, to him every knee shall bow, and the creature that resists shall be ruled to eternity with a rod of iron.

The other floating object which attracted our notice, I found to be intended to warn us of danger; something like those express cautions which are exhibited to warn us of every danger through the whole voyage of life, and be the means of guarding us with safety to the port of glory.

Towards the close of the day, the boundless ocean began to open to our view, and bespoke something of the majesty and grandeur of him who justly claims the universal sovereignty of earth and sea. What a noble idea of God are we presented with by the prophet who represents him as holding the capacious ocean in the hollow of his hand \*! This grand object is made use of to represent to us that fullness of pleasure which he has in store to satiate the souls of them that fear him, and those floods of vengeance which he has prepared to overwhelm and drown the ungodly. This was the element upon which the Lord of all worlds chose to give such displays of his glory and Godhead in the days of his flesh, as to astonish the souls of his wondering disciples †. Had he not made choice of such a work, as baffled all human power, to shew the superior authority of his word to the efforts of all creatures, the glory of his Godhead might have been disputed with some colour of reason, but now there can be no cloak for ignorance, nor argument for envy. The famous Sea

\* Isaiah xl. 12.

† Mark iv. 41.



of Tiberias, renowned for miracle, was the grand scene of holy actions, where the apostles saw, and from whence the church has learnt, the true character of *God with us*.

Thus far the sea opened more and more to our view. Such is the case with the advancing Christian, the boundless prospect opens wider and wider to his faith, as he retreats farther and farther from the narrow shores of life, and approaches to the never-ending state. Happy, happy they, who enjoy brighter, clearer, and wider prospects of eternal felicity, the nearer they are to finish their Christian course.

Hitherto the generality of our company appeared to carry jollity and mirth in their countenances; but now we began to see the blushing rose die in the sickly cheek, and several of our passengers began to feel the sickening effects of the rolling sea; they withdrew from their associates, grew sick of their mirth, and in pleasure crept into a corner, and silently mourned their lost pleasures in solitude. What was this but acting over again what we had many times seen on shore? for many, after a life spent in the jovial enjoyments of worldly pleasure, grow sick of their unsatisfying delights, withdraw themselves from their merry companions, sink into distress and obscurity, live unnoticed and unpitied, and at last die in vexation, disappointment, and despair.

The world has little friendship for any but those who can keep equal pace with them in their pursuits; for when once the power of relish is lost by sickness, poverty, or dejection, they live or die neglected and forlorn.

Thrice happy the souls, who are by divine grace made sick of unsatisfying delights, and compelled to withdraw from unsatisfying objects, and seek and find permanent bliss in the friendship of Immanuel!

There had been the appearance of affability and good-humour kept up among the passengers of our vessel,

vessel, and a reciprocal exchange of civilities had passed between them; our bad tempers were for a while laid aside, and we seemed mutually agreed to make each other as innocently happy as our present circumstances would permit. If the same mode of conduct was observed through the whole of our department, how would the ills of life be softened, and the ties of society sweetened!

But, alas! it frequently happens that the lady who carries a smiling countenance into every public assembly, wears an aspect as cloudy as a louring winter's day in her own family; and the man who appears all affability at the tavern, play-house, or place of public resort, indulges the furiousness of the lion, the furliness of the bear, and the unconquerable obstinacy of the ungovernable ass in his own house! It does not appear, that the religion of Jesus Christ forbids the wise and prudent exercise of the human passions, but commands such a management of them, as to discountenance sin; for that they may be in their full exercise, without contracting moral defilement, is evident from the example of infinite purity itself\*.

Dispositions purely natural, materially differ in different persons; but the spring and origin of this variety, is only known to him who is the fountain of being, and is acquainted with all the movements of all the bodies and spirits he has formed.

Those who are favoured with a happy natural disposition, are, on many accounts, laid under greater obligations to thankfulness to God; but have no just ground of glorying, as they have no more hand in forming the temper of their minds, than the shape of their bodies; and as we may observe the same variety among the irrational part of creatures; for there are horses and dogs, as preferable

\* Eph. iv. 26. Mark iii. 5.

to others of their species in their tempers, as the fawning spaniel to the growling wolf. But it is a notorious truth, though the natural temperament of men so widely differs, yet the morose Nabal, and the soft flexible yielding lady, are equally averse to God and holiness, and equally need the hand of omnipotent Grace to form and fit them for God and heaven\*. Good natural dispositions may render a man less criminal, by not impelling him with equal violence in the practice of enormous vices; but the decision of this must be left to the infinitely wise Judge of human actions.—Reason and philosophy seemed to bear sway so much among us for a few hours, that whatever difference there might be in this particular, it could scarcely be discerned.

From the jocularly and seeming freedom from care which appeared in our company, I was led to reflect upon the different states our affairs might be in at home.

Gentlemen and ladies we were most of us in appearance, and we were going to places where it was necessary to support our characters as such; but whether our duties to our families, our obligations to our creditors, and our ties in society, religious and civil, would with propriety admit of this, could only be determined by every person's knowledge of his own circumstances.

Imprudence, and an inordinate love of pleasure, often lead persons to infringe on all these, and to plunge themselves into inextricable difficulties.

The eyelid of the day was now nearly closed upon us, and the gloom of darkness began to surround us, which, together, with the hollow bellowing wind, and dashing waves, had a tendency to create very solemn ideas in the mind; and I being a stranger to such scenes, had my mind exercised upon

\* Romans iii. 12. John iii. 3.



things of greater importance. This launching into the mighty deep in the dark, said I, may resemble the solemn departure of a beclouded Christian, or like the more tremendous exit of the soul void of illuminating grace.

Did but the heavens open, and emit their light, and present the prospect, the widely differing prospect, to each of these persons, how contrasted would their views and feelings be!

The believer would discover every terrifying image totally and eternally withdrawn, and the wide-spreading prospect discover every thing enchanting to his soul.

Into these fathomless deeps all must infallibly enter, and but few, in comparison, enjoy clear views of what is before them; darkness, less or more, will attend every one till he makes the actual experiment.

The believer's faith\*, indeed, in vigorous exercise, supplies the place of sensible vision; and with the view that she affords, eternity has nothing to terrify, but every thing to transport the souls of those whose hopes lie beyond the bounded prospects of time.

The terrible curse of a broken law—the sharp envenomed sting of death—the worm that never dies—terrifying objects!—are seen no more. No frowning Judge, no condemning tribunal, no executioners of divine vengeance are presented to the soul found in the Redeemer; but all that may enchant a sanctified soul, as, full vision of the divine brightness, uninterrupted society with God, complete conformity to his beautiful image, and full possession of unspeakable felicity.

These all stand confest before the eye of the soul, when light is afforded, like the goodly mountain of

\* Hebrews xi. 1.

Lebanon to the view of Moses. But from the beclouded Christian these animating prospects are concealed, and he enters the eternal deeps like us in the dark.

As for the soul void of illuminating grace, the ocean of eternity has nothing but what threatens him with horror, despair, destruction, and woe. No wonder, if the hopeless soul starts at the prospect, if the least glimpse of light is afforded, and makes many fruitless efforts to draw back to the shore of time; while others, like drunken, shipwrecked sailors, sink intoxicated, stupid and senseless, into the boundless deep, and are strangers to a struggle for safety, until they find themselves sinking into the bottomless pit.

About ten o'clock on Friday night we were brought safely into the harbour of Margate, and there cast anchor, in order to set a great number of our passengers on shore, who were bound to that place of rendezvous. How great are the advantages of navigation! By the skill and care of three men and a boy, a number of persons were in safety conveyed from one part to another of the kingdom. A small share of skill, in many important affairs of life, will complete that which power *alone* can never effect. How can we but admire that proportionate degree of operative knowledge diffused among the several orders of mankind, and especially that share allotted to men in inferior stations! for, though their information is not so much of the ornamental kind, it is by far the most beneficial. What a miserable set of beings would a company of scholars and philosophers be, condemned to live apart to themselves, deprived of the advantages arising from the labour and industry of the working hand! There is an admirable fitness in the genius, inclinations, and capacities of men for the discharge of the different offices of life; and all of them guided and over-ruled by an

all-pervading Providence for general good. This practical knowledge is the very soul of all commercial intercourse among men, and the spring and fountain of almost all our domestic enjoyments. I reverence this more in the husbandman, sailor, and mechanic, than I do the pageantry of state, or the useless learning of schools: we could live and be happy without the one, but misery and death would infallibly follow the loss of the other. God is to be seen in all this; for of the laborious ploughman, the skilful artist, and the hardy sailor, it may be said, his God doth instruct him \*. Nor is the over-ruling guidance of the choice of men to their several employments less admirable. That there should be a suitable proportion in the number employed in navigating of ships, tilling the land, making of shoes, and every other employment necessary for the well-being of society, every man is left to the freedom of his own choice, and yet no station in life has been entirely deserted; for what menial service soever you wish to have performed, for a trifling reward you may find a servant at your call. This must be owing to the all-wise superintendence in human affairs; for there can be no doubt that, left entirely to their own inclinations *alone*, all would be fond of filling the stations where ease and affluence abound, masters would encrease to a destructive number, and servants would so diminish, as that many of the necessary duties of life would be left undone. What, but the pride of our fallen nature, can induce us to think contemptuously of the most laborious, and consequently the most useful part of mankind? I cast my eyes round my habitation; I view a seat to repose myself on, a table for the convenience of eating, a bed for the purpose of resting myself when weary, and a thousand other conveniences; and ask myself,

\* Isaiah xxviii. 26.



to whose labour I am indebted for all these accommodations of life? and the answer immediately is, To the labourer in different occupations. The wisdom of God is seen in the increase of this operative knowledge, according to the increase of the necessities of men. For when the multiplying family of heaven began to abound, he capacitated them mutually to serve each other. Had they all been confined within the narrow limits of the eastern continent, navigation had, in a manner, been useless. Could they all have had personal intercourse, printing and writing would have been less necessary. And it is easy to see, that many of the later discoveries have been suited to the increasing necessities of men; witness, the improvements in navigation to the discovery of the American continent.

By this operative knowledge we are instructed to make all the elements serve the purposes of our present well-being; and we really enlist them all into our service; for fire, earth, wind, and water, are compelled to perform their part towards the support and preservation of man. Winds and waves, without this, might have conspired to make us and our little vessel a readier prey to destruction.

What is the universe, but a large floating vessel, carried down the stream of time by the gales of Providence into the ocean of eternity? The whole hierarchy of angels appear in their employment to be but as the ship's crew; and I am not sure, but they may be divinely capacitated for the performance of the several purposes necessary to convey the loaded vessel to the determined point\*. The jarring of elements, and contrary effects of natural causes since the entrance of sin, might have caused a shipwreck before this time, had not the whole been steered by an all-wise Pilot, and wise and intelligent beings

\* Prophecy of Daniel, latter part.

employed in his service. The universe is then on her voyage. The divine Owner has great purposes embarked on this bottom. She will shortly land all her passengers at their destined ports; and when the designs of her great Master are fulfilled, she, like other vessels, will be laid aside, broken to pieces, and committed to the flames \*.

Every inferior community is conducted by a sort of navigation; and God has constituted and appointed this for the regulation and the preservation of society among men.

The state is but a kind of floating vessel; and the idea of steerage and navigation is kept up, when we call the seat of power the Helm of affairs. She is in the same state of fluctuation, liable to prosperous gales and adverse winds; and many a towering state, after a series of prosperous events, has not only been driven backwards in her affairs, but totally sunk in the sea of oblivion †. The management of this vessel, under God, is put into the hands of men, ordained, raised up, and qualified by him ‡; and the removal of such men, and the introduction of men of bad morals and base views, is threatened as a national curse, and ought to be considered as a great calamity §. By the venality, covetousness, and debauchery of men in trust and power, nations have been brought into such danger, as to be compelled to cast their choicest treasures overboard, to save themselves from sinking. Happy is that nation, whose officers are men of peace, and their exactors, or leviers of taxes, are men of righteousness ||.

The wisdom of God is conspicuously seen in the rise and downfall of empires, and the means he makes use of to effect the one and the other.

\* 2 Peter iii. 11.

† Jeremiah li. 63, 64.

‡ Isaiah xlv. 1—4.

§ Isaiah iii. 1—5.

|| Isaiah lx. 17.

The *real* church of Christ, in the present state, is not so much like a well-founded city, as a ship in the ocean tossed with a tempest; but in the midst of this state of fluctuation, she has never been left without skilful mariners, qualified and employed to conduct her safely through the sea of tribulation. Eph. iv. 11—15. She, like the rich merchant ships, has conveyed the inestimable treasure of gospel-blessings to the different inhabitants of the earth, and divinely enriched them with durable riches\*. Adverse winds, under the direction of Heaven, have conspired to drive her to distant shores, for the good of the inhabitants. Thus, the troubles of Judea, the wars of Cæsar, and the turbulent measures of the Stuarts have been over-ruled, for blessing Asia, England, and America, with her choicest commodities. The case has been sad with them, when her officers and men have sunk into indolence, being intoxicated with the cares of this life, and paid little attention to the right management of the heavenly vessel. Sink she cannot, for good reasons, but suffer loss she may and does: her beauty has been in a measure defaced, and her intrinsic worth much impaired; so that instead of a stately, gallant ship, that did credit to her owner, she has borne the appearance of a broken, defaced, leaky, and wretched vessel, more likely to sink into oblivion than to arrive at the port of glory with an abundant entrance†. Every little society and family must be prudently navigated, or exposed to a shipwreck in their affairs; for often the comforts, fortunes, and lives of the members of them are put to the hazard, through the indolence, dissipation, and unskilful conduct of those in whose hands these are entrusted, in those little communities: but let wise and good men stand in such stations, they will order their affairs with discretion‡.

\* Prov. xxxi. 14.

† 2 Pet. i. 11.

‡ Psalm cxii. 5.

When



When we had safely landed our passengers at Margate, we weighed anchor about eleven o'clock at night, in order to sail round the North Foreland for Ramsgate. The North Foreland is a point of land which stretches out some way into the sea, and is the extreme part of our country on the right hand, when we sail down the river Thames; and sailing round the point into the British channel is esteemed by sailors rather dangerous. However, there was danger enough to awaken the apprehensions of a fresh-water sailor. Yet here, with some degree of confidence in Him who exercises his power over the sea and dry land, I laid me down, and slept in quietness, while the rattling waves drove against the sides of our vessel, and the rustling winds shook our sails, and made our yielding masts to speak. I was led to reflect, that now there was but a feeble plank between me and the bottomless deep; yet, by a reliance on the divine goodness, my fears were hushed, and a divine calm prevailed within. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on thee\*.

On Saturday morning I awoke, and heard a peaceful sound from shore, which informed me it was two o'clock; and enquiring where we were, I found we were safe anchored within the commodious harbour of Ramsgate. Being so early an hour, we again composed ourselves to sleep, and lay till five o'clock; then leaving our sleeping apartment, and mounting the peaceful deck—not like the frightened sailor, who leaves the horrid hulk to view a thousand deaths from winds, and waves, and rocks, without a friendly shore in view—but to see one of the finest retreats from all these dangers, which Providence has provided for the safety of those who are exposed to the violence and rage of angry elements. The commodious Pier of Ramsgate seems admirably calculated

\* Isaiah xxvi. 3.

to shelter and protect vessels which are threatened with destruction from winds and waves. This beautiful piece of architecture is built in the form of a crescent, or half-moon, the points of which join to the land.

It has a narrow entrance in the centre next to the sea : it is of that extent, as to contain a great number of ships, where they may lie in great security in the most boisterous seasons.

Being built of stone, it is of sufficient strength to resist all the violence of the waves which beat against it. It is of a breadth and thickness to form something like an agreeable terrace-walk, for the company, on the top of it, so that several may walk abreast without inconvenience. Its situation is peculiarly advantageous, being a ready retreat for ships coming from the German ocean, in the north, or for those coming from the east or west, down the narrow seas.

The whole of this building of utility appeared to bear a clear resemblance to the glorious Mediator in his offices, who is appointed for a refuge from the storm.

It bespeaks great generosity and compassion in its first design. What but the generosity and compassion of God laid the foundation of Christ's mediation?

The foreseen distress of vessels at sea, gave rise to that work of benevolence ; so the foreseen misery into which sin would plunge us, gave an opportunity for the exercise of that boundless compassion and good-will, which discover themselves in the great business of our salvation. Its form and situation are peculiarly inviting to ships in distress ; it stretches its capacious bosom for their reception, and seems to say to every tempest-tost vessel, " Turn in hither \*."

\* Proverbs iv. 9.

Is there not every thing inviting, and nothing forbidding, in an all-sufficient Mediator, exalted on purpose to be a Prince and a Saviour?

It has no gates, but its entrance stands open night and day. How does the Saviour's declaration agree with this, "Whosoever cometh I will in no wise cast out \*!"

Its immoveable walls receive and resist all the violent efforts of the angry waves, which otherwise would be infallibly spent on the undefended shipping. How has the blessed Redeemer placed himself between the waves of angry justice and the souls of his people? With what violence have they dashed against him, and how immoveably has he stood against their united force, while, under his shelter, the souls of his chosen have lain in peace and security †!

Some ships, I observed, had taken shelter in this place of safety, and were repairing the damages they had sustained at sea ‡. Whatever dangers they had been exposed to before they entered here, they now lay in the greatest security, and their thoughts were wholly turned upon the damages they had received, and the rectifying those injuries.

Lively figures of those happy souls who have been long in suspense about their safety, while the tempests from sin, Satan, and the law of God lay upon them; and by them been driven into God's appointed refuge, under the conduct of the heavenly Pilot! Having thus entered into rest §, and their thoughts, in some measure, settled as to the safety of their condition, they are principally employed upon having the damages repaired by rectifying grace. There were some ships, I was informed, that had been dashed to pieces against the very building which secured others from the storm; too much like those

\* John vi. 37.

† Psalm xlii. 1. 3.

‡ Psalm cxxiv. 5.

§ Hebrews iv. 9.



unhappy souls, who stumble at that stumbling-stone\*, which will infallibly grind them to powder†. It is possible some may perish through ignorance, or want of information that such an expedient was provided, though doubtless the intercourse of nations has been the means of spreading this information. The provision of a Mediator was, doubtless, less universally known in ages past, than in later times; and why God suffered all nations so long to walk in their own ways‡, is a question which cannot be resolved by the wisest of men.

But as the provision of a Saviour was an act of Divine sovereignty, so was the publication of that grace. Hence we see sovereignty displayed in the information given to different ages, nations and persons. There has been evidently a distinction; and some have enjoyed advantages, which others never experienced§. How this can be made consistent with the scheme of equal and universal love, I leave the abettors of that sentiment to determine; but it seems strange to me, how he who, as they say, gave the highest proof of his good-will to all, could afterwards deny any inferior advantage||. Respecting the grace of the Gospel, the Scriptures serve as a public advertisement, to be read by all into whose hands they come; and the ministers of Christ supply the place of public cryers, in every nation, city and town, where they are sent; their principal business is to publish the good news¶, to shew the sufficiency of the Mediator for the purpose of saving souls\*\*; to invite men to come and partake of the benefits††, and to make known the safety and happiness of those who fly to the hope set before them‡‡. Though these are the principal ends of the

\* Romans ix. 32.

† Matthew xxi. 44.

‡ Acts xiv. 16.

§ Ephesians iii. 5.

|| Romans viii. 32.

¶ 1 Corinthians v. 19.

\*\* Hebrews vii. 25.

†† Matthew xxii. 9.

‡‡ Acts xiii. 38, 39.

publication of Gospel-grace (that is to say, the information and salvation of the elect); yet, I doubt not but other important ends are answered thereby; for the wisdom and justice of God are to be fully exhibited by his conduct towards all his creatures, as well as his mercy and grace towards the objects of salvation. By over-looking this, I conceive, that good men have erred on the right and left of truth, and raised questions in the Christian Church, which have done little else but call off the attention of men from things of greater importance.

The necessity of this information may be seen by examining the state of the wisest heathens without it: they give us evidence, that neither reason, learning, nor philosophy, in their highest exercise, were sufficient to find out the true means of safety without a Revelation\*. The light of reason and nature furnished the ancient sages with just and proper notions of an *absolute* God†; but the knowledge of God, as reconciled to men by the life and death of a Mediator, was as profound a secret as though it never existed; witness, these following testimonies; where God in his absolute character is spoken of with great justice, but not a word is said of the mediation of his Son. Zoroaster, the famous Perſian prophet, says, "God is the first of all incorruptible beings, eternal and unbegotten; he is not compounded of parts; there is nothing equal to him, or like him; he is the author of all good, and entirely uninfluenced by passions; the most excellent of all beings; the wisest of all intelligent natures; the father of equity; parent of good laws; self-instructed, self-sufficient, and the former of nature‡." Thus spoke the oracle of Magian wisdom! Another of the great masters of reason and human wisdom says, "God is the most excellent of all beings; the author of the

\* 1 Corinthians i. 21. † Romans i. 21. ‡ Bayle's Dictionary.

universe; without a beginning or end; from whose sight nothing can be concealed. Fate is nothing but the immutable reason and eternal power of his Providence." This is the language of Thales, the founder of the Ionian School among the Greeks. Nor did the Latin philosophers appear a whit more instructed in the mystery of godliness, though enjoying greater advantages by living in later times. For Seneca the Moralist, and tutor of Nero the Roman Emperor, echoes to the two former, and says, "By Jove, we understand the guide and guardian of the universe; the master and architect of the great machine: all names belong to him. You are not in the wrong, if you call him Fate; for he is the cause of all causes, and every thing depends upon him. If you term him Providence, you fall into no mistake; for his wisdom governs the world. If you stile him Nature, you err not; for from him all beings derive their origin, and in him they live and breathe." Thus far the light of Reason and Nature conducted the wise men of old; but for want of a Divine Revelation, they appear to be dunces, when compared to a ploughman with a New Testament in his hand. When the above is considered, a Scripture difficulty is resolved; as we are told, the heathens, by the light of nature, knew God; yet the same infallible word declares, that the world, by wisdom, knew not God; intending, doubtless, that by the light of nature they saw something of the perfections of an absolute God; but were totally ignorant of him, as he is made known in Christ: so that this knowledge of him, must be obtained by a new discovery; and this discovery is the substance of the Gospel.

By this building of benevolence, the safety of men by Christ is beautifully represented; yet the glory they obtain through him, is but faintly shadowed by such an emblem. There is a glory connected

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with the salvation obtained by Christ, which cannot be properly set forth by the most splendid human objects, nor comprehended by the most capacious human mind\*. This glory is revealed to us under the ideas of crowns, and palaces, and kingly grandeur; but all these images are faint and imperfect, when compared with the thing itself. The figures made use of in Scripture to convey instruction to us, respecting the heavenly subject, are such as the Holy Ghost has thought proper to use; but they are only suited to our present state of darkness and imperfection†. Whatever we converse with in the present state, even the most august and pompous, is but transient and temporal, and its nature earthly; while the things which make up the glory of the future world, are purely spiritual and heavenly; and earthly objects, the most grand and magnificent, can no more give us the true representation of the heavenly glory, than the beggarly cottage of a peasant, made up with sticks and straws, can give us a just description of the shining splendor of an emperor's palace.

By six in the morning we went on shore, and joyfully met our friends, who were brought down the night before; but in their passage were overtaken in a violent storm of thunder and lightning, whilst our voyage was smooth and prosperous; but, in the morning, we all met in equal peace and safety. Thus we sat down to a friendly breakfast, and cheerfully talked over the adventures of our little voyage. Something like this, I think, may take place in the state of blessedness. The passage of different Christians through the world, and of the church in different ages, has been as contrasted as the conflicting life of David, and the prosperous passage of Solomon his son; and, yet, both being happily terminated, will afford matter for joyful contempla-

\* 1 Corinthians ii. 9.

† John iii. 12.

tion. Much delight the souls of the saved will, doubtless, derive from an after-reflection on the variegated scenes of Providence, in which Divine wisdom and goodness have been so variously displayed. This, if I mistake not, will make no small part of the intercourse of the blessed, while each private history will furnish something to give fresh pleasure to the listening assembly. While we were thus employed, we consulted how to dispose of ourselves while we continued at Ramsgate: we mutually agreed to form ourselves into a little family; and though we could not all lodge, yet we wished to board together in the same house: indeed, we were but sojourners, for we were no sooner settled, than it was time to prepare for a removal. Our little family gave us a proof how Christians might live in the present state; for it proved to be, what every Christian family ought, a family of friendship and love. Our sentiments in religion were different, and religion was frequently the subject of our conversation; yet I do not remember, that any thing like the shadow of a quarrel took place during the continuance of our abode together. One thing that principally conduced to our tranquillity was, that we seemed mutually pleased to see each other happy: indeed, I have the best reason to believe, that the good things of God were the principal objects of delight and esteem with us all; consequently, we were not offended when they were spoken of, nor backward to join the conversation. In order to pursue the design of our coming, some of our company mixed among the bathers at the sea-side. The conveniency of bathing, the coolness of a fine summer's morning, the agreeable appearance of company so early, and the novelty of the scene, had a very pleasing effect, and, I cannot but think, well calculated to give relief in those complaints contracted by over-application to study or business.

Now we began to look around us; and though we were not presented with objects of taste and elegance, yet the town and environs afforded us some rural prospects, which yielded both instruction and pleasure. Upon our left hand, as we ascended from the sea-side, stands the seat of observation, erected on a point of land, and commanding an extensive prospect over that part of the sea called the Downs, where you behold a number of ships lying at anchor, or on their passage to different parts of the world. From hence you may likewise see the lofty cliffs of France, and reverberating the light of the sun; while, at the same time you may, by way of amusement, watch the motions of every boat coming in and going out of the harbour; and as the sea is always varying, its appearance altogether affords an agreeable amusement. Here the company frequently stop to rest themselves after a morning's or an evening's walk, and are sweetly regaled by the cool refreshing breezes of the sea.

It must give pain to every generous heart, to think that this seat should ever be occupied by men who watch for the moment of misery, to catch an opportunity to plunder the distressed. It is justly to be lamented, that ever such characters should infest a Christian shore. No doubt but from hence there may be opportunities of frequently displaying the most generous dispositions the human mind is capable of entertaining, in succouring the unfortunate; but birds or beasts of prey inherit no worse dispositions, than those which excite a man to take advantage of a brother in adversity.

The situation of my friend, the miller, on the hill, must strike the observation of an inland traveller; for such is his station, that he can attend to the necessary employment of his calling, and, while his hands are busily engaged in his useful vocation, can, with only a cast of his eye, be regaled with one  
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of the most pleasing prospects that eyes can behold. On his right hand, he sees the wide-spreading deep, covered with vessels of different nations, and various descriptions, passing and repassing for the kindly purposes of commerce and mutual benefit of mankind.

On his left hand, he is presented with a wide capacious field covered with the growing corn, the grazing cattle, or labouring husbandman, according to the different seasons of the year. It being high harvest when I was there, to me the prospect appeared truly enchanting.

But his situation bears too great a resemblance to the more elevated stations in life, by far the most desirable in the most prosperous seasons.

He may see and feel the boisterous uproar of nature by sea and land; while I, in a more lowly retreat, enjoy my domestick repose at home. Too often has the fate of court-favourites proved to the world the dangers attendant on an elevated life. It has been frequently seen, that he who to-day looked down upon the world below, and saw delightful scenes on every hand, is to-morrow, by the changing of times and seasons, presented with misery, danger, and death, from every quarter; while the lowly peasant, in a more secure situation, feels no alarms from a kingly frown, popular disgrace, or the sharpened edge of an honourable axe; all things that much becloud the sunshine of exalted prosperity! Ye favourites of fortune, who are raised by Providence above the level of your fellow-men, forget not, that the changing winds and varying seas are not more fickle and inconstant than the smiles of worldly prosperity. The miller's prospect, in a shining summer's day, is as permanent as the gilded skies and smiling gleams of human felicity. That man only is happy, who, exalted by the favor of his God, enjoys a state more settled than the everlasting

mountains \*, and possesses the unshaken testimony of an unchanging God, that it shall never alter for the worse †. Nor have we a picture in the miller's situation of those only lifted to eminent stations in the sphere of their actions, but likewise of those who are exalted by an eminency in natural or acquired endowments. We have all an inclination for climbing; and so we can acquire an height, we spurn at the dangers that may attend it. This I saw to be the case lately, with one of the finest geniuses in the connection in which I stand. It must be allowed, that in natural and acquired abilities he did excel, and by them attained a degree of eminency; and so far there was nothing amiss: but, alas! as states of exaltation often prove fatal, and dreadful in their effects, so it appears in this case; for, like the man in the mill, stunned with the noise that surrounds him, and grown giddy with his exaltation, the good man seemed really to lose sight of his own circumstances, as an indigent creature; to forget the grand end of his employment, and to overlook the precious truths he was once engaged to defend. I saw him in this situation, and gently hinted his danger; but my kindness was slighted, and my caution judged impertinent. I viewed him as an object of respect and reverence; at the same time my pity mixed with my esteem. I knew he possessed many amiable qualities, and only looked upon him, as giving awful proof of the frailty of the best of men in a whirl of tempestuous applause. Many serious and good men I have heard very affectionately lament the loss of his fellowship since his exaltation, and repeat, with regret, the pleasure they enjoyed while he stood on even ground with themselves. For my own part, I have sincerely prayed to the God of all mercy, that he will not suffer him to fall headlong from his aspiring

\* Isaiah liv. 10.

† Psalm cxxv. 1.

height,

height, to his own ruin; but bring him gently down by humbling grace, set him on firm ground, and make him long stand as a pillar to uphold and defend the truth.

We were one day favoured with an inside view of the venerable old church of St. Lawrence, where the trophies of death were displayed in abundance, and the bravery of many a gallant commander celebrated. Did I, said I, possess the fruitful imagination of a HERVEY, and enjoy the flowing numbers of his pen; what scope for meditation have I before me! I might, like him, proceed from stone to stone, and gather instruction from every inscription. All that is here said by the monumental marble, is but a lengthened comment on that just, but solemn declaration, "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return." Whatever dangers any of these persons might be called to encounter, by sea or land, and might really surmount, the unalterable sentence took hold on them in the identical moment prefixed by infinite Wisdom. In what condition it found each of these victims, is not for us to determine; but the mouth of infallible Truth asserts, They only are blessed who die in the Lord.

Death most certainly reigns in this state, and must infallibly in the next, unless he is some way despoiled of his dominion. No other means can be pointed out by reason or scripture, of doing this, but the all-sufficient mediation of Christ. The undoubted testimony of God gives us the firmest assurance that this is effectually performed\*. The holy law of God being broken by us, armed death with its dreadful curse, "to sting us for our transgression†." But the Redeemer did actually submit to take the sting into and upon himself, and thus to satisfy the just demands of the holy law‡. He has

\* 2 Timothy i. 10. † 1 Corinth. xv. 56. ‡ Galatians iii. 13.



so fully performed this, that the law has lost its power to condemn, and death his dominion to destroy those who are found in him\*. God, in proof of his satisfaction and reconciliation, has admitted the Redeemer into the heavenly inheritance in their names; and now God has given the most firm and unequivocal assurance, that every believer shall eternally escape the destroying effects of death, and enjoy the benefits of eternal life. This assurance is given in the sure word of promise, and by the Holy Spirit bearing witness in the soul†. But an unknown number of the human race, the same testimony assures us, will eternally lie under the power and dominion of death. And, without entering into inexplicable reasons, I take this to be owing to the just, uniform, and natural course of things taking place, without prevention or interruption on the part of God or man; as, a man seized with a mortification must die, if no means are used to prevent the spreading of that destroying malady; or, like him who commits the horrid sin of murder, must suffer death, if the law is permitted to take its due course. Notwithstanding the strong pleas which are urged by some, from some doubtful or misinterpreted passages of Scripture, for God's being unwilling‡ that any part of the human race should fall under this worst of calamities, and his using every means, with a sincere desire to prevent it, it cannot be inferred, either from the nature of God, the usual methods of his proceeding, or the leading tendency of Scripture; but it rather appears to be the pleasure of the Almighty to leave some men, whose cases shall exemplify the glory of his justice in their misery, as it is to preserve others from the deserved destruction, for the display of his glorious grace§.

\* Romans viii. 1, 2. Hebrews ix. 12. † Hebrews vi. 17, 18. 2 Corinthians i. 22. ‡ 2 Peter iii. 9. § Romans ix. 22, 23.

As we made little excursions round the neighbourhood, in certain places I observed a kind of vaults cut in the chalk-hills.

These I call the Cathedrals of the ancient Christians; for they wandered in dens and caves of the earth, of whom the world was not worthy\*. What venerable and reverend councils and synods have been held in such places in the wilderness of Judea, the valleys of Piedmont, and the woods of England! Christ has not disdained to preside in such assemblies, and to direct their consultations; while the great, learned, and right reverend conclaves of a worldly church have been left to ordain decrees, and pursue schemes, contrary to the interest of Christ's kingdom, and ruinous to their own and other men's souls. What a vast agreement there appears in the constitution, spirit, and conduct of an assembly of Christian divines in some parts of our history, when they met to transact ecclesiastical affairs, and a sanhedrim of Jewish elders met to crucify Christ! The likeness is so striking, that I have often wondered, that wise men have not discerned it, and that never a Gamaliel has been found, that would give the ancient, but wholesome advice†. While dens and caves of the earth were the habitations, and sheep-skins and goat-skins were the clothing of the ancient worthies, the state, the garb, and the company of their persecutors bore a very great likeness to Bonner and his companions.

Let us try the occurrences that have taken place among religious men, in Italy, France, and England, by this criterion, and we shall usually find the observation of Solomon, Eccles. iv. 1. founded on truth. Every thing of this sort convincingly proves to us, that this is not the state of final retribution; for here the just are ordained to suffer, and the

\* Heb. xi. 38.

† Acts v. 38, 39.

wicked

wicked allowed to triumph. How evident is it, that the Almighty seeth not with eyes of flesh ! for when a company of brick-makers, depressed with slavery, and disgraced with drudgery, stand opposed to the then politest court in the world, he decidedly declares in favour of the disgraced.

By the allotment God appoints to his favorites, we are fully informed, that things most pleasing to us, are not always most productive of real good. There is no doubt, but these under-ground retreats are now often used for the vilest of purposes ; yet this destroys not the force of my observation, seeing the Scripture gives us evidence, that such places have been honoured with some of the greatest and best of men the earth ever bore.

Part of our company usually took a solitary walk on the beach, between bathing-time and breakfast ; and while the cool morning air sweetly refreshed us, our meditations were assisted by the high stupendous cliffs on the one hand, and the ebbing sea on the other. By the solidity of the sand, we seemed to walk on a smooth solid floor at the bottom of the sea.

The cliffs form a prodigious high wall, quite perpendicular, while, at the ebb of the tide, the waters retreat near half a mile from the shore. For contemplative minds, these objects furnish matter for abundance of reflection ; these solid and stupendous barriers are the immoveable boundary of the turbulent ocean ; and an enlightened eye may discern inscribed upon them, " Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther ; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

Surely, these may represent to us the immoveable purposes of Jehovah, by which all causes and creatures are limited to his determination : the same all-determining purpose being equally prevalent in heaven, earth and hell. Is it not to these we owe our safety from the raging, rebellious, tumultuous powers  
of



of hell ? otherwise, like the raging, angry waves of the sea, without banks, they would burst in upon mankind, and overwhelm the world with a deluge of sin and misery. The wicked and ungodly dispositions of men, without restraint, would rise and swell until reason, religion, conscience and truth were overwhelmed with an inundation of prophaneness; but his immoveable purpose bounds the rage of these swelling tides; and though they dash themselves with the most impetuous violence against these unshaken rocks, yet they cannot prevail. What Divine consolation must this afford to him who views God as Supreme, and habitually lives in the exercise of faith upon this heavenly truth ! He may hear the Divine voice say to troubles of soul, diseases of body, and distresses in Providence, "Hitherto shall ye come, and no farther." These firm resolves of the Almighty, how immoveable have they stood, and maintained their station for ages and generations, while threatening commotions have prevailed over sea and land ! These, my soul, are the sure dwellings, and peaceable habitations\*, which are thy residence for everlasting. But how tremendous is the fate of those who are, by the raging wind and stormy sea, driven against these unclimbable heights ! Death beneath, and all above is death !—Fain would they escape the storm, and fly to the friendly shores ; but these forbid their feet to tread the peaceful land. Earth and sea seem joined in league, to deliver up the unhappy victims into the hands of death. Ah ! far more doleful is the case of those who, for crimes committed against the Sovereign of earth and heaven, are forbid to shelter from every creature ; for death and hell shall give up the dead that is in them, and the firm, the high, the immutable decrees of Almighty God forbid them

\* Isaiah xxxii. 18.

for ever to set foot on the shore of peace and rest. Unhappy mortals, call to the rocks; but they are as deaf to your cries, and immoveable to your groans, as your uncircumcised ears and hearts have been to the sweet inviting language of Gospel-grace. Blessed Jesus, before that solemn day arrives, help the reader to fly for refuge, and find a safe sanctuary in thy bosom.

Then, should the earth's huge pillars shake,  
And all the wheels of nature break;  
His steady soul need fear no more,  
Than solid rocks, when billows roar.

How regular, constant, and almost invariable are the laws by which the great Supreme regulates all his creatures!

This tide, at a fixed determined moment, began to recede from the shore; it will keep retreating until a determined moment again, and then, without any uncertainty, return to its usual limits; and this motion is so regular and certain, that the wary sailor can calculate the time to a moment at many leagues distance, and months before the time, and catch the desirable opportunity to serve his own designs. Nothing, in all the wide dominions of God, seems to be left to contingency, but an invariable determination prevails through the whole. Is not this a strong presumptive proof in favour of Divine decrees? Shall the all-wise God ordain and regulate the flight of a sparrow, and the fall of a hair, and leave the eternal well-being of an angel or man at uncertainty? Can any reasonable man suppose, that Divine foreknowledge and predetermination are not directly employed in business of such importance? If any should be disposed to enquire, where then is the freedom of intelligent agents? I answer, "In the same state as the freedom of that swallow, which

which the last spring left the colder regions, and came and built and bred in the chimney of my house \* ;” there being a decree subsisting before she had a being, and the time of her coming was appointed by an immutable decree; but she, unconscious of any such superior law, *freely* followed her natural inclinations, and fulfilled the Divine appointment in doing so. The free agency of the most sagacious spirit in all the infernal crew, was neither more nor less than this in the great business of crucifying Christ. Many who chuse to turn their thoughts, tongues and pens, upon this momentous subject, are like to men upon the top of these cliffs, afraid to look to the bottom; because, the more they contemplate the profound mystery, the more they dread the fate of falling. All that can be said to persons in this state, is, to intreat them not to dispute and condemn, only because they cannot comprehend. Others there are, whose impious attempts only serve to establish the truth, and to prove their own opposition to God; who are like men that stand and spit against these immoveable rocks, and then rage, because they will not give way to such feeble malice.

How little are some of the most surprising phenomena of nature attended to, only because they occur so frequently, and with such regularity! such as the uniform returns of darkness and light, the constant succession of heat and cold, the ebbing and flowing of the tide, and a thousand other objects equally common. It is looked upon as a prodigy, if the returns of these are by any means interrupted; but the abiding miracle of their regularity is little attended to. The world of nature is perpetually exhibiting miracles in every part of it; but hood-winked mortals lose sight of them, by attend-

\* Jeremiah viii. 7.



ing to little trifling objects of no importance. Other mysteries, in the natural world, God has hid from the most penetrating eye. His wisdom is very conspicuous in what he has concealed, and in what is made known of these mysteries. Enough is made known for man's use and benefit; but where vain curiosity would proudly pretend to bring these secrets within the compass of its narrow comprehension, it is checked by the veil of obscurity which God has cast over a part of his works. Much talk has been in the learned world, about the laws of gravitation and attraction; and many of the mysteries of nature have been accounted for, by resolving them into the one or the other of these; but that inclination in bodies, which we call Gravitation, and that disposition in them, which we term Attraction, are little understood, though much talked of. Were they called the power of God in his creatures, we should not then be led aside from the all-disposing cause, nor exposed to the danger of substituting imaginary powers in the place of God. The ebbing and flowing of the tide is found of great utility, and said to be regulated by the attractive influence of the sun and moon. But what that attractive power is, or where it resides, no man alive can decisively tell. I am very far from blaming the most industrious investigation of the works of nature; at the same time, let us humbly acknowledge the shallowness of our own capacities, and admire the unbounded wisdom of God displayed in his works.

It might be thought strange, was I to say nothing of Margate, that being the place of chief resort for bathers, and of growing repute. The town of Margate is in a very increasing state, and its principal ornaments consist in its late additions. The chief concern of the publick seems to be to render it as much a place for pleasure as utility, as, under colour of utility, persons can pursue pleasure without censure. A mother, for instance, might

might be highly blamed by her acquaintance, for leaving her family for a month, and going to spend her husband's money; but who can blame her when her health requires it? They are modelling it according to the taste of the times. They have, indeed, built one place of worship, but a play-house nearly four times as large. Thus, when ill health does not interrupt the company's pursuit of amusement, they are likely soon to be accommodated to their minds. Such is the provision already made, that the consumptive cough of a delicate lady may be furnished with the relief of the fumes of a smoking-hot assembly-room, and the embarrassed citizen may drown his anxiety in the amusements of the card-table. The play-house, in that warm season of the year in which bathing is most desirable, is, doubtless, well calculated to relieve from the vapours, and serve to put death and eternity out of the minds of such as are unwilling to entertain such gloomy ideas.

The libraries are decently furnished, and may serve as a kind of lounging Exchange, where persons overburdened with money and time may ease themselves with great facility. The most healthful amusement, and best suited to invalids, that is pursued at Margate, is that of the bowling-green, where, upon the top of a hill, in full prospect of the sea, in a free open air, gentlemen may exercise their bodies and unbend their minds: this, if pursued for the benefit of health and innocent recreation, with a serious friend, appears to have no more criminality in it, than Peter's going a-fishing. If this short description of Margate should not prove satisfactory to my readers, they are to understand, that I was but once in the town, and that but for a short time, and in a very unfit state to make observations.

Having staid as long at Ramsgate as our affairs at home would, with prudence, admit; we went on board the same ship on Monday afternoon, the twen-

tieth of August, and re-embarked for London, but with a very small company on board. In order, I suppose, to take the better advantage, we sailed some leagues right out to sea; but it being a dead calm, we hardly experienced any other motion than was occasioned by the tide and swell of the sea for that night. The cry of the sailors, Blow! blow! reminded me of that pathetick exclamation of the ancient Church\*. The next day proved equally calm, so that we had little else to divert us, but walk about the deck, and watch the rolling of the porpoises in the sea. We had an old sailor on board, whose patience being tired, declared he preferred being at sea in a storm to being becalmed on the ocean; which struck me with the propriety of the observation, when applied to Christian experience; for a storm, under Divine direction, is often made the means of hastening the Christian's progress, while a dead calm is useless and unsafe.

We lay beating about all Monday afternoon, and on Tuesday morning only found ourselves off Margate; but the tide carrying us forward by slow degrees, we made some little way towards London. In our passage we saw a vessel cast on shore, which lay along on her side, and cut a dismal figure; such as they make to an enlightened eye, who make shipwreck of faith, whom Christians see, as they pursue their course, run a-ground, and dash to pieces. Hereabouts, a rather humorous circumstance took place. Some of our company, upon discovery of something floating on the water, cried out, A prize! a prize! Two of the crew immediately scrambled into their boat, put to sea, and gave chase, who, when they came up with their prize, found it to be a good sailor's hat, and an old tea-kettle without a lid, both of which they safely brought on board. While

\* Cant. iv. 16.



we slept on Tuesday night we made the most way; and on Wednesday morning when I came upon deck, I was charmed with the prospect. The morning was clear and serene, and the sun had overtopped the neighbouring hills, which, at a distance, we could see covered with corn. While the labouring husbandman was carefully gathering in the fruits of the year, the bleating sheep, and crowing cock, made the land and water echo with their notes. A great number of vessels and boats appeared on the water, while the buildings of Gravesend Town and Tilbury Fort glittered against the rising sun, and added beauty to the prospect. But as we had been long on the water, some of our friends grew impatient to be at home. Here, therefore, we hired a boat, and four men to row us to London; but the wind getting up, and the water growing rough, they begged us to get on board a fishing-smack going to Billingsgate; where we safely arrived, and went on shore about five in the evening. But the health I went in pursuit of I entirely missed; and I was brought home to endure one of the sharpest dispensations I ever experienced, to be reduced by a violent stroke of the palsy, from a healthful, vigorous state of body, in a few months, to be one of the most feeble and helpless of human beings; surrounded by a wife just expecting the time of nature's distress, and a large family of small children in a very sickly state. My wife has been happily brought through her distress; our infant the Lord has taken to himself; our children are restored to tolerable health; but as for myself, I seem to be apace hastening to the eternal state: yet through the whole of this heavy affliction, the Lord has taken occasion to display so much of his goodness, that I never can discharge my obligations to praise him. He has sealed that instruction, and afforded that consolation in the course of this exercise, that constrained me to say, "It is good for me that I have

have been afflicted \* \* \* He has laid me under such a sense of his kindness, that my heart goes out with the pious exhortation of David, addressed to them that feared God, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!"

Psalmicist 71. *Tring,*

March 1, 1788.

Against the rising sun, appeared beauty to the prof-  
pect. But as we had long on the water, some  
of our friends grew impatient to be at home. Here,  
therefore, we hired a boat men to row us  
to London; but the wind getting up, and the water  
growing rough, they begged us to get on board a  
fishing smack going to Brixton; where we safely  
arrived, and went on shore about five in the even-  
ing. But the health I went in pursuit of I entirely  
missed; and I was brought home to endure one of  
the sharpest dislocations I ever experienced, to be  
reduced by a violent stroke of the palsy, from a  
healthful, vigorous state of body, in a few months,  
to be one of the most feeble and helpless of human  
beings; surrounded by a wife just expecting the  
time of nature's distress, and a large family of small  
children in a very sickly state. My wife has been  
happily brought through her distress; our infant  
the Lord has taken to himself; our children are re-  
stored to robust health; but as for myself, I seem  
to be a mere passenger to the eternal state; yet through  
the whole of this heavy affliction, the Lord has  
taken occasion to display to much of his goodness,  
that I never can discharge my obligations to praise  
him. He has tested that institution, and afforded  
that consolation in the course of this exercise, that  
contrained me to say, "It is good for me that I  
have

to be in the